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*The great Duty of remembering God's
Dispensations, opened and urged,*

IN A
S E R M O N

PREACHED in

St. *T H O M A S*'s

JANUARY I, 1747-8.

FOR THE

B E N E F I T

OF THE

CHARITY-SCHOOL

In Gravel-Lane, Southwark.

By *WILL. LANGFORD*, M. A.

Published at the Request of the MANAGERS.

L O N D O N :

Printed and Sold by J. WAUGH, at the *Turk's-Head*
in *Gracechurch-Street.* M DCC XLVIII.

[Price FOUR-PENCE.]

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Dispositions, opened and urged

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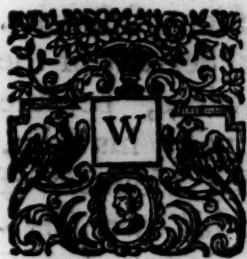
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DEUT. viii. 2.

And thou shalt remember all the Way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty Years in the Wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine Heart ; whether thou wouldst keep his Commandments, or no.



We are assembled together this Day, to begin a new Year, with Acts of Piety and Charity ; and forasmuch as a solemn Recollection of God's Dispensations to us, is manifestly seasonable and subservient to these excellent Purposes ; this is the Duty which I shall endeavour to explain and recommend to you in Dependance on the good Spirit of God for Assistance and Success.

The Words which I have made Choice of, as the Subject of my Discourse, were spoken by *Moses* to the Children of *Israel*,

a little before his Death and their Entrance into the *Land of Promise*. *Moses* was an hundred and twenty Years old when he died, but by miraculous Supports from above his Nature was preserved blooming and vigorous to the last, *his Eye was not dim, nor his natural Force abated*, Deut. xxxiv. 7. And we have Reason to think the Faculties of his Mind were no more impaired than the Frame of his Body.

This Man of God had conducted his People under a Divine Direction forty Years in the Wilderness, in which Space of Time that rebellious and murmuring Generation that came out of *Egypt* was gradually consumed: None of them (save *Caleb* and *Joshua*, who had another Spirit with them) were permitted to take Possession of *Canaan*. — *Moses* himself, the faithful Servant of the Lord, was denied this Privilege, because he once spake unadvisedly with his Lips. An awful Monument of the Holiness of God! An awful Warning to his own Children in all Ages! He is a God that forgiveth them, but he may take Vengeance on their Inventions.

When *Moses* knew that the Season of his Departure was at hand, he called the People together, and recited in their Hearing, the principal Laws of God that had been delivered to them, and the most memorable Instances of the Divine Conduct towards them

them in the Course of their Pilgrimage ; and in the Words of my Text, he exhorted them, as their dying Father and Leader, seriously to remember all the Dispensations of God to them, both comfortable and afflictive, with the Reasons and Ends of them, and how they should be improved to their future Advantage.

Thou shalt remember all the Way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty Years in the Wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee to know what was in thine Heart, whether thou wouldst keep his Commandments or no, and (ver. 16.) to do thee good at thy latter End.

The Apostle teacheth us, that all Things happened to the Children of *Israel* for Examples, and are written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come, 1 *Cor.* x. 11. Their Deliverance from *Egypt* was a Type of our spiritual and eternal Redemption from Sin ; Satan, the World, and Death, their long and wearisome Passage in the Wilderness, represents the various Changes and Troubles of Human Life in general, and in particular the manifold Afflictions and Trials of the Righteous in their Way to Heaven ; God's extraordinary Presence with them in all their Progress from *Egypt* to *Canaan* ; represents the gracious Care he takes of his People in their present State of Imperfection
and

and Distance from their happy Home. And as the Views of the Divine Conduct towards his Servants in this Life are the same with those expressed in my Text, *viz.* to humble them and to prove them, to do them good at their latter End ; they must apply to themselves the Exhortation here given to the Children of *Israel* ; and though it is in a special Manner incumbent on good Men to remember all the Way which the Lord their God hath led them in the Wilderness of this Life, none of us are exempted from the Obligation of this Duty.

I shall therefore (1.) make some Observations on the Nature of Divine Conduct, which is the Subject of Recollection. (2.) Shew that it is our Duty to recollect the various Instances of the Divine Conduct towards us. (3.) In what Manner these Things should be recollected. (4.) Offer some Motives to the Practice of this Duty. And in the concluding Application, we shall not forget that good Work of Charity, which is expected this Day.

I begin (1.) with some Observations on the Nature of Divine Conduct, which is the Subject of Recollection.

Divine Conduct includes all the Dispositions of God's Providence and Grace to us in the present State. And we may observe, (1.) That God's Conduct is a fulfillment
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of his eternal Counsels, known unto him are all his Works from the Beginning ; he performeth the Thing that is appointed for us ; *for he worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will*, Eph. i. 11. the whole Scheme of Creation, Providence and Redemption, was formed in his infinite and immutable Mind from all Eternity.

(2.) The Divine Conduct is General or Special ; the first is common to all Men, the latter is the Privilege of God's own People. Providence extends its Care to all Mankind, without Exception, and to all other Creatures in the Universe ; none are above, none are below the Notice and Government of God ; they that disbelieve or disregard Providence, are nevertheless the Subjects thereof. — The Hearts of all Men are in the Hand of the Lord as well as their Breath, and their Times — he governs all their Actions as Instruments subservient to the Purposes of his Glory ; the Way of Man is not in himself ; for though *a Man's Heart deviseth his Way, yet the Lord directeth his Steps*, Prov. xvi. 9. — He restraineth the worst of Men from many Evils that are in their Hearts, he often changeth their Minds and Resolutions by a sudden Turn of Thought or of outward Circumstances ; and when he suffers them to take their own Way ; the Effects of their Actions are absolutely in his Management, and often prove

prove quite contrary to their Intentions ; what they meant for Evil he meant for Good. — God's infinite Eye surveys all Things past, present, and to come ; his Almighty Arm sustains the whole Frame of Nature ; and as all the Powers of Creatures were originally derived from him, and are entirely dependent upon him, and subject to him ; it is manifest, nothing can come to pass without his Permission or Appointment ; his Dominion therefore is Supreme and Universal — in him we live, and move, and have our Being — the Hairs of our Heads, and the Months and Moments of our Lives are all numbered by him ; the different Capacities of our Minds and Constitutions of our Bodies, the Bounds of our Habitation, our various Means of Knowledge, and our Opportunities of doing and receiving Good, the Circumstances of Health and Sickness, Riches and Poverty, Comfort and Affliction, are allotted to us, by the great Creator and Governor of the World. — This is the Idea we should retain in our Minds of the Divine Conduct, as it relates to Mankind in general. — Let us now briefly consider God's special Conduct towards them that are his. — He guides them by his Counsel as long as they live, and afterwards receives them to Glory. — *For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, Heb. xiii. 5. I will instruct thee, and*
teach

teach in thee the Way which thou shalt go : I will guide thee with mine Eye, Pf. xxxii. 8. David tells us, that the Eyes of the Lord are upon the Righteous, and his Eyes are open to their Cry, Pf. xxxiv. 15. And that the Steps of a good Man are ordered by the Lord, Pf. xxxvii. 23. His Mercy is from Everlasting to Everlasting on them that fear him, and he performeth all Things for them ; in answer to their humble and fervent Prayers, he gives them special Counsel in many of their temporal Undertakings and Affairs ; there are innumerable Examples of this Truth in the Scriptures, and they are confirmed by the Experience of the Saints from Age to Age ; but the most illustrious Instances of Divine Conduct towards the Righteous, are those that relate to the Interests of their Souls ; the Way he takes by his Word, Providence and Spirit, to convince them of their Sin and Misery, and to lead them to Christ by Faith ; the Methods he, after this Saving Change wrought in them, is pleased to make use of in order to confirm their Faith, to increase their Love, to mortify their Corruptions, to preserve them from falling, to recover them from Backslidings and Declensions, to correct their Faults, to encourage them in their Duties, and prepare them for a blessed Eternity ; these are Things that will be had in everlasting Remembrance.

(3.) I observe, that the Divine Conduct in many Particulars is mysterious, and to us incomprehensible. We see not the Work of God from the Beginning to the End, and therefore are very incompetent Judges of it; sometimes he makes himself manifest to us, and we hear the Voice behind us, saying, this is the Way walk ye therein, but very often he leads us in a Way that we know not, and yet it is the right Way to a City of Habitations; we are ready to cry out under perplexing Difficulties, all these Things are against us; and if the Lord be with us, why are we thus? But good Men, whatever they may think of their Cases, are continually with him; and he will make all Things work together for their Good. --- What he doeth, perhaps, we know not now, but hereafter we shall know.

I observe therefore, (4.) That the Divine Conduct is absolutely perfect. *God's Work is perfect, for all his Ways are Judgment: A God of Truth and without Iniquity, just and right is he, Deut. xxxii. 4.* His Dispen-sations to impenitent Sinners in this Life, are not only equal, but good and merciful, and have a Tendency to their Conversion and Happiness; and what is the Aim and Design of all his Dealings with his own Children, but to humble them, and to prove them, and to do them good at their latter

latter End ? He seeth shameful Remains of Pride, even in the best of them here below ; and by Mercies and Judgments, with the attending Influences of his Spirit, he subdues this evil Principle, and nourishes the Grace of Humility, which is the Soul and the very Essence of Christianity. --- And by both these Ways of Conduct, he proves them, not to inform himself, but to discover to them what is in their Hearts. --- *Abraham's Faith and Job's Patience* were made manifest by the grievous Trials appointed to them. --- *Hezekiah's Pride, and Peter's Presumption and Self-confidence* were exposed by suitable Temptations, and their Miscarriages are recorded as Warnings to all of us, *That he that thinks he standeth may take heed lest he fall*, 2 Ch. xxxii. 31. Matt. xxvi. 60, &c.

God will try his People, *Zech. xiii. 9. I will bring the third Part through the Fire, and will refine them as Silver is refined, and try them as Gold is tried : they shall call on my Name, and I will hear them : I will say, it is my People, and they shall say the Lord is my God.*

And the great Intention of all his humbling and trying Allotments is to do them Good at their latter End, or to prepare them for Death and Heaven. *David's Observation is very wise and good, Mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright : For the End of that Man is Peace*, Ps. xxxvii. 37. I

confess some upright Persons have gone out of the World in a dark Cloud ; but as all the Righteous are prepared for Death, so many of them finish Life with triumphant Joy ; and this has been the Happiness of some Christians, who were almost all their Life-time subject to Bondage through Fear of Death. --- In the Even-tide God has given them Light, and wiped away all Tears from their Eyes, with the tender Hand of a loving Father ! --- “ My dear Child, oft
 “ hast thou doubted whether thy Love to
 “ me was sincere and superlative ; I saw
 “ how painful this Thought was to thee,
 “ I saw the Integrity of thy Heart, and
 “ gave thee some Tokens of the Kindness
 “ of my Heart ; and now, behold, I am
 “ come to put an End to all thy Conflicts
 “ and Fears ; thou shalt enter into Peace, a
 “ boundless Eternity of Joy and Praise shall
 “ succeed the few Years of thy Mourning ! ”

Happy Afflictions that lead to such an End ! The Nature of Divine Conduct being considered, we proceed (2.) to shew, that it is our Duty to recollect the various Instances of Divine Conduct towards us.

It is a Duty incumbent on Sinners and Saints. (1.) Sinners (I mean impenitent and unreconciled Sinners) should attend to this Duty. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, *Remember this, and shew yourselves Men: Bring it again to Mind, O ye Transgressors*, Is. xlv. 8.

“ O thought-

“ O thoughtless and ungrateful Creature,
 “ (does God say to the Sinner that has hi-
 “ therto lived, as without him in the
 “ World) I have led thee thus far in the
 “ Wilderness of this Life, though thou hast
 “ not known me ; I brought thee into the
 “ Light of this World, and thou wast cast
 “ upon me from thy Mother’s Womb ; I
 “ supported thee in the feeble and helpless
 “ Season of Infancy ; I carried thee through
 “ the Periods of Childhood and Youth ;
 “ I have fed thee all thy Life long, and re-
 “ deemed thee from Evil ; I have protected
 “ and defended thee ; given thee a Measure
 “ of Health, Ease, and other temporal
 “ Enjoyments ; I have favoured thee with
 “ my Word and Ordinances, the Means of
 “ Grace and Salvation ; many Years have I
 “ waited for thy Return, and now I call
 “ thee to recollect the Patience and Good-
 “ ness I have exercised towards thee, and go
 “ not on in a way of Ungodliness and Sin ! ”

(2.) The Children of God are more es-
 pecially called to this Duty ; for the Hand
 of God hath been upon them for Good
 from the Beginning of Life unto this Day ---
 before their Conversion they were spared
 in Mercy --- what had become of *Saul*
 if he had been cut off while a Persecu-
 tor, a Blasphemer and Injurious ? What
 had become of the penitent Thief, if he
 had been Slain in his Wickedness, before
 he

he was acquainted with Jesus Christ? What had been the State of the Goaler if the Earthquake that shook the Foundation of the Prison had swallowed him up before his Conscience was awakened, and Mercy directed him to an all-sufficient Saviour? And what had been thy Doom O Christian, (whoever thou art that hearest me at this Time) if God had not been patient and long-suffering towards thee in the Season of thy Ignorance and Rebellion? How great was the Power of God, that at length subdued thy Heart, and made thee a willing Subject of Christ's Kingdom? How Rich and Sovereign the Mercy that pardoned all thy Sins, and covered thee with the Garment of Christ's perfect and everlasting Righteousness? And how numerous and endearing have been the Effects of God's paternal Love and Faithfulness to thee ever since thou wast taken into his Family? Some of them have been already mentioned, and surely they deserve the most serious and affectionate Remembrance— whoever therefore may think himself unconcerned in the Subject of this Discourse, I persuade myself every sincere Christian will be ready to acknowledge his Obligation, to remember all the Way which the Lord his God hath led him in the Wilderness of this Life.

Let us now consider (3.) what Sort of Remembrance this should be. —

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It is not an idle musing on past Events that I would now recommend to you, but a Recollection accompanied (1.) with humble and fervent Prayer for the teaching of God's holy Spirit — when we enter on such a Work as this, the Prayer of the Psalmist is very seasonable, *Pf. xxv. 4. Shew me thy Ways, O Lord ; teach me thy Paths.* — Oh ! leave me not to the Blindness of my own Understanding, but set thy Dispensations before me in a clear Light, that I may know thy Mind in them, and what thou requirest of me. — If we ask Wisdom of God through Christ in Faith it shall be given us.

(2.) This Duty should be attended with serious and diligent Self-examination --- when we remember God's Way we must not forget our own, but consider well our State, Temper and Practice. --- “ What am I ? A Christian, or an unreconciled Sinner ? Is there Peace between God and my Soul through Jesus Christ ? Have I entered into his Service by the strait Gate of a sound Conversion ? What Progress have I made in the Christian Life ? What Improvement of my Time and Talents, Mercies and Afflictions ? Do my Graces increase with my Years ? As I am continually approaching nearer to another World, am I more abstracted from Earth and fitted for Heaven ? ” These are important

portant Questions ; we should seriously propose them to our Consciences, and patiently stay for an Answer.

(3.) We should repent and apply to Mercy, through a Mediator, for the Forgiveness of all our Sins.

If we recollect God's Dispensations to us (as we ought) we shall remember our Faults this Day. Some of us (I fear) have persisted unto this Hour in a wilful Course of Iniquity, notwithstanding all the Means that have been used to reclaim us ; we have trampled on the Laws of God, and despised his rich Goodness, Forbearance and Long-suffering towards us ; he hath daily loaded us with his Benefits, but we have wearied him with our Sins, and caused him to serve with our Iniquities ; he hath bound us in the Fetters of Affliction, but we have not cried unto him ; he hath smitten us, but we have not received Correction ; how many Calls, Warnings, and Offers of Mercy have we rejected ? And shall not the Time past suffice us to have done the Will of the Flesh ? Is it not high Time for us to be-think ourselves, to mourn and weep, and call upon God, for Christ's Sake, to pardon and convert us ? We should repent to Day, for we may die To-morrow, and sooner, it may be, for we know not what one Hour may bring forth. --- I must add, under this Head, that the best of Men, when they

they reflect on the Divine Conduct, compared with their own, will see abundant Reason for Repentance? Alas! How little Good have we done? How slothful have we been in our Master's Business? How often have we violated our holy Engagements? How little Proportion has there been in our Fruitfulness to our Mercies, and the Time of their Continuance with us? We should therefore humble ourselves before our heavenly Father, look to the reconciling Blood of Jesus, and implore the Assistances of his Spirit, that we may consider our Ways and turn our Feet to God's Testimonies, that we may make Haste and not delay to keep his Commandments. --- This is an Exercise, Christians, more peculiarly seasonable, in the near Prospect you now have of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper; a broken and a contrite Heart is a Sacrifice which God will accept through the atoning Sacrifice of his dear Son, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sin of the World.

(4.) We should adore and praise God for all the Loving-kindness and Faithfulness he hath manifested to us in the Course of our Pilgrimage.

Hitherto the Lord hath helped us, having obtained Help of him we remain unto this Day --- what shall we render to him for all his Benefits? For his sparing Mercy,

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which hath preserved us so many Years in a calamitous and dying World ? For his providing Mercy, which hath supplied our numerous Necessities ? And above all, what shall we render to him for his redeeming Mercy, for the Mission of his Son to seek and save us, for the Gift of his Spirit to us, for any good Hopes we have through Grace, of Forgiveness, Acceptance, and a Right to eternal Life ?

Oh ! that Men would praise the Lord for his Goodness, and for his wonderful Works, to the Children of Men !

And in this Service of Thanksgiving we must take special Notice of special Mercies --- have we been recovered from dangerous Diseases of Body, in which all Hope of Life failed ? Have we been delivered from devouring Flames, Sons of Violence, or other impending Evils ? Have we been directed in difficult Circumstances, relieved in pressing Wants, and supported under grievous Troubles ? Hath the Lord refreshed our Souls in Seasons of spiritual Darkness with the Tokens of his Love ? Oh ! let these singular Blessings be acknowledged with the warmest Gratitude and Affection !

(5.) We should trust in God for future Supplies. O Christian, has God been thy Sun and Shield in the past Periods of thy Life, and will he not be thy Guide unto Death ? Has he been thy Help, and wilt thou

thou not still trust under the Shadow of his Wings? Will not this God be thy God for ever and ever? Yes --- for he hath made with thee *an everlasting Covenant, that he will not depart from thee to do thee Good, but will put his Fear into thy Heart, that thou shalt not depart from him*, Jer. xxxii. 40. So that thou may'st boldly say, the Lord shall deliver me from every evil Work, and preserve me to his heavenly Kingdom; and, I am persuaded, *That neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate me from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord*, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

(6.) We should resolve, through Grace, to serve the Lord in Righteousness and Holiness all the remaining Days of our Lives --- this is a Resolution that must be often renewed in the Christian Life; and, it is evidently suitable, after a solemn Review of the Divine Conduct, considered in Connection with our Behaviour: We should, on this Occasion, yield ourselves afresh to God in Christ, with fixed Purposes of New Obedience; fully determined to walk more watchfully, and be more diligent and constant in all the personal and relative Offices of Life, in all the Ordinances and Statutes of God, to redeem our Time, and wait for

our great Change in the Way of Faith, Patience and Righteousness. And these Resolutions must be made in the Strength of Christ, whose Grace is sufficient for us, and who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy.

I go on (4.) to offer some Motives to the Practice of the Duty, which hath been explained.

(1.) This is our reasonable Service, the proper Exercise of our rational Faculties — inconsideration (especially of divine and eternal Things) sinks a Man below the Beasts that perish — this is the Testimony of God himself. *Is. i. 3. The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib; But Israel doth not know, my People do not consider,* and *Jer. viii. 7. The Stork in the Heaven knoweth her appointed Times; and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow, observe the Time of their Coming, but my People know not the Judgment of the Lord.*

(2.) The Observance of this Duty is one of the distinguishing Characters of good Men — the Ungodly consider not the Works of the Lord nor the Operations of his Hand; they are a People that do err in their Hearts, and have not known his Ways; but the Eyes of the Righteous are ever towards the Lord, attending to the various Motions of his Hand, and the Discoveries

coveries of his Perfections in the Government of the World and the Church, and in his ordering of their own Lot — they acknowledge him in all the Varieties of their external Condition ; and they observe, with special Care, the different Aspects of the Father of Spirits on their Minds, and can distinguish his Presence and his Absence, his Smiles and his Frowns ; this Discernment is an essential Property of the spiritual Life.

(3.) By the right Discharge of this Duty we shall glorify God — for how can we glorify God, but by a due Notice of his Wisdom, Sovereignty, Power, Goodness and Truth, displayed in his Word and Works ? And to glorify God is Man's chief End, the Honour and Excellency of his reasonable Nature, and the Sum of all his Duty — all Creatures above and below, and round about us, glorify God passively, as they are the Works of his Hands ; but we must glorify him actively, by ascribing to him the Honour due to his Name ; and them that thus honour him he will honour.

(4.) There is an inexpressible Pleasure in this Duty — Oh ! how delightful must it be to a good Man, in a religious Frame of Mind, to sit down and review the Dispensations of Providence and Grace to him, the Fulfillment of Scripture-Promises and Threatnings in his past Experiences, the
admi-

admirable Adjustment of Things in the the History of his Life, and the joint Operation of all Events for his true Interest? This Recollection gives the most pure and substantial Joy, a Joy far Superior to all the Pleasures of Sense, and the more refined Entertainments of philosophic Speculations; a Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.

(5.) Consider the manifold Advantages of this Duty — it is an excellent Means of enlarging our Acquaintance with God and ourselves, and consequently of preserving us from Evil, and of keeping us in the Ways of Devotion, Humility, Faith, Hope, Patience and Holiness, and so of preparing us for the World of unmixed and eternal Happiness, where every Desire shall be satisfied, and all our Capacities filled with Enjoyment.

What remains now, is the Application of the Subject. And as the whole Discourse hath been practical, I shall only beg Leave to offer a Word of Exhortation to two Sorts of Persons, the Careless and the truly Religious --- it is grievous to think how many there are, even in this Land of Gospel-light, who, through a Disbelief of Religion, or a criminal Neglect of their professed Principles, live as without God in the World; they know they are dying Creatures, but they manifest as little Regard

gard to a Future State, as if they were sure they should live for ever in this, or that their Existence would terminate with their Breath. --- The great God calleth every one of us this Day to remember and repent, and he enforceth his Command by the most awful and affectionate Expostulations: O! thoughtless Transgressor, he speaks to thee in such Language as this --- Behold, now is the accepted Time! Behold, now is the Day of Salvation! Wilt thou not, from this Time, cry unto me, my Father, my Father? Wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be? Wash thine Heart from Wickedness that thou mayest be saved; how long shall thy vain Thoughts lodge within thee?

Does thy offended Creator and Sovereign express so kind and compassionate a Concern for thy Happiness? And wilt thou be regardless of it? God forbid! Oh! bow thy Knees to the Father of Mercies, in the Name of Christ, the only Mediator, and say unto him, take away all Iniquity, and receive me graciously; turn thou me, and I shall be turned --- but I must likewise address to real Christians --- Oh! let the Counsel that has been given you at this Time be acceptable to you! Remember all the Way which the Lord your God hath led you in this Wilderness, and the wise
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and gracious Ends of his Dispensations. --- Study the Providence of God, and attend more than ever to the internal Operations of his Grace. --- Humble yourselves for your Mis-improvements of his precious Benefits ; and present to him, through Christ, a plentiful Thanks-offering for all his Goodness to you. --- But to come to the last Part of my present Work ; if we are thus disposed, in the Remembrance of God's Ways, and our own, we shall not want many Arguments to excite us to Acts of Charity ; for these are natural Expressions of our Gratitude to God, and the Sense we have of our Unworthiness of the least of his Mercies. --- I therefore apply to you, with chearful Hope of Success, for some Fruits of your Christian Benevolence, to a considerable Number of poor Children, in your Presence, who are educated in the Charity-School in *Gravel-lane, Southwark*. --- The Account I have in my Hands of the State of this School, is this : ---

“ The Foundation of it was in the Year
 “ 1687, in the Reign of King *James* the
 “ Second ; when a School was set up by
 “ one *Poulton*, a Jesuit ; and public Notice
 “ given, that he would instruct the Chil-
 “ dren of the Poor *gratis* ; upon which
 “ Mr. *Arthur Skallet*, Mr. *Samuel War-*
 “ *burton*,

“ *burton*, and Mr. *Ferdinando Holland*, (all
 “ Members of this Church in the Reverend
 “ Mr. *Nathaniel Vincent*’s Time) laid the
 “ Foundation of this School, to avoid the
 “ dangerous Consequences of a Popish
 “ School, and to provide for the Instruc-
 “ tion of the Poor in the Protestant Way.
 “ The Number of Scholars at first was
 “ Forty, afterwards increased to Fifty, and
 “ and now to One Hundred and Forty. ---
 “ They are here taught to Read, Write and
 “ Cypher, and are also instructed in the
 “ Assembly’s Catechism, in order to their
 “ being qualified for the Service of God
 “ and Man. --- It may be said to be the
 “ first School the Protestant Dissenters were
 “ concerned in. --- Here Objects are re-
 “ ceived without Distinction of Parties, the
 “ general Good being intended. --- It is
 “ situated in one of the poorest Parts about
 “ the City ; and the Children of the poorest
 “ Sort of Watermen, Fishermen, and Others,
 “ are here taught without any Expence
 “ to their Parents, and are furnished with
 “ Bibles, Testaments, Catechisms, Writ-
 “ ing and Cyphering Books.
 “ The Charges have been defrayed by
 “ the Gifts and Subscriptions of private
 “ Persons, with an annual Collection in
 “ this Place on this Day, together with
 D “ the

“ the kind Remembrance of the said School
 “ by some in their last Wills.”

Many abler Preachers, who have gone before me in this Service, have pleaded the Cause of Charity-Schools, (under proper Regulations,) and set forth the recommending Circumstances of this School in particular, with great Advantage. — I shall therefore say but little on this Subject. — It is certain, the Education of Children is of vast Consequence to the Public, for the Happiness or Misery of all Communities must very much depend on the Principles and Manners of the rising Generation. — Those that are blessed with Affluence in Life, justly reckon it among the chief of their Privileges, that they are able to give their dear Off-spring an Education suitable to their Birth and Circumstances; and if they are truly wise, and good Men, they will be greatly concerned to have their Children trained up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; the Children of the Poor, whose Parents cannot furnish them with any Means of a tolerable Education, are doubtless Objects of Pity, — I grant, they are not generally to expect such a Degree of Instruction as those born in a higher Rank are entitled to; but surely the Principles of Humanity (and much more those
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of Christianity) will not suffer us, without Reluctance, to see them utterly neglected, and sent out into an evil World destitute of that Measure of Knowledge, which is highly expedient to their being good Men, good Subjects of Civil Society, and useful Persons in the lower Stations of Life, which Providence seems to have allotted them --- who can think, without Compassion, of the many that are brought up from their Childhood in Profaneness and Immorality, and then cast upon the World untaught, undisciplined Creatures, inclined to all Evil, and fit for nothing but to disturb the Peace of Society, and work out their own Destruction? How much more comfortable will the Review of an Act of Charity, for the Support of the Education of poor Children be to us, especially in a dying Hour, than the Remembrance of unnecessary Expences in Dress, Food, and the vain Pleasures of this Life? Oh! the pure and exalted Satisfaction that is included in Works of Christian Benevolence! No Words can describe it. --- To think I am now following the Father of Mercies, as one of his dear Children, by a humble Imitation of his Goodness and Compassion; I am now following the amiable Example of my Saviour Jesus Christ, who went about doing Good; I

obey his Command ; I express my grateful Sense of his unparallelled Grace, who was Rich, but became Poor for my Sake ; that I, through his Poverty, might be Rich ; I now sow Seed that may spring up many Days hence to the Glory of God, to my own Comfort in this World, and my eternal Joy in the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ ; Oh ! this is a Pleasure that exceeds the Imagination of those who are Strangers to the Exercise of Christian Charity !

But not to multiply Arguments on the General Head of Charity ; I shall conclude, with a few Remarks on the State of this School, for which I am to beg your kind Encouragement. --- The Antiquity and the Increase of it deserve your Consideration, it has subsisted about One and Sixty Years, and from a small Beginning is grown into a very large charitable Foundation. ---- I hope we shall not be willing to let so good a Work decline, in our Days. The Season and Occasion of the setting up of this School are worthy of your Notice : It was founded in dark and troublesome Times, and in Opposition to Popery, which was coming in, like a Flood, upon these Lands. And if we consider, how artful and indefatigable the Emissaries of *Rome* are, to
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this Day, in their Endeavours to corrupt the Minds of the common People, and recollect the late wicked Attempt, that was made to dethrone our most gracious and only rightful Sovereign, and to introduce Popish Darkneſs, Idolatry and Slavery, into theſe Nations; we ſhall ſee the ſame Reaſons for the Continuance of this School (with others of the like Nature) that moved the worthy Gentlemen, whoſe Names have been read to you, to lay the Foundation of it. — And as the pious Perſons, who firſt embarked in this Cauſe, were all Members of this Church; you, my Friends, will look upon this School, as ſtanding, in a ſpecial Relation to you; and, I hope, will not be weary of that, which is your Honour, I mean, your annual Contribution to the Support of it. — The Admiſſion of all fit Objects, without Diſtinction of Parties, is a Circumſtance of this Charity, that ſhould, I think, recommend it to the Eſteem and Affection of wiſe and good Men.

The prudent Manner of Education, in this School, ſets it clear of the principal Objections that have been urged againſt Charities of this Sort; for here is nothing to flatter the Pride of poor Children, and to raiſe them above themſelves, but only a due Care to inſtruct them in the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion,

ligion, as they are abridged in that excellent Form of sound Words, the Assembly's Catechism, and to teach them to Read, Write and Cypher ; that is, to qualify them for Usefulness in the lower Forms of Life, and above all, to lead them, by the Blessing of God, into the Paths of Truth and Holiness in their early Years. So that I apprehend this Charity is unexceptionably Just and Good.

I beseech you, therefore, Brethren, by the Mercies of God, which have followed you all the Days of your Lives ; and, in particular, by the Mercies of the last Year, to communicate with chearful Liberality to the Encouragement of this School. And may the Lord accept and reward your Benevolence, thro' the Merits of our dear and only Redeemer Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be Glory for ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S.